

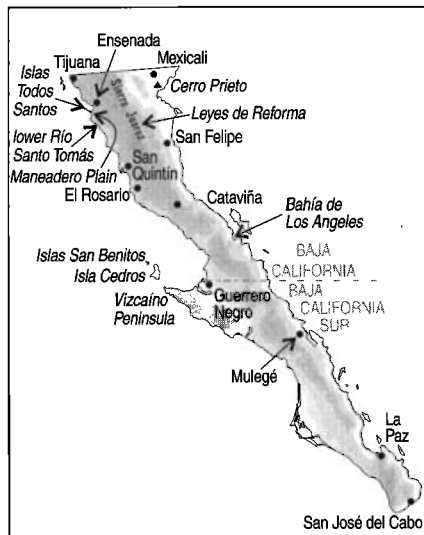
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Baja California Peninsula



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Temperatures were near average this season, but rainfall was very low. The Region's first ever Christmas Bird Count was held at Ensenada, bringing out a modest contingent of eager birders from both the U.S. and Mexico. This seasonal report lists 4 January—the CBC date—a remarkable 19 times, evidence that the count generated a considerable volume of noteworthy distributional information that would have otherwise escaped detection.

Abbreviations: B.C. (Baja California); B.C.S. (Baja

California Sur); U.A.B.C.S. (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur).

BOOBIES THROUGH TERNS

Near the California border, three species of boobies were recorded at Islas Los Coronados: an ad Masked and 3 ad. Browns 20 Jan (REW) and an ad. Blue-footed 27 Jan (†BKP, vt. DB). Brown Boobies have become regular on these islands in recent years, and it was an exceptional season for Masked Boobies in California, so the Blue-footed Booby was actually the least expected. Although up to 38 were recorded on these islands in 1971, the species has gone unrecorded on the coast of California since 1990.

American Bitterns appear to be in decline on much of the continent and are rarely reported in our Region; one was at Estero Punta Banda 3-12 Dec (RAH et al.). Up to 5 ad. and 2 imm. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were found at Lagunas de Chametla 14 Dec-15 Feb (RC, LS et al.), where the species has occurred fairly regularly since 1995. Noteworthy geese included Snows at Estero Punta Banda and on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (DSC, MSM et al.) and at Estero San José del Cabo 20-30 Jan (up to 5; GB, AC et al.), and a Lesser Canada Goose continuing at Lagunas de Chametla to at least 26 Mar (RC, SGM et al.). Regionally rare ducks included male Eurasian Wigeon at Estero Punta Banda 3 Dec (RAH, RAE) and 13 Jan (MDC), a female Greater Scaup at Estero Punta Banda 12 Dec (SM, ELM) and 5 females at Guerrero Negro 6 Feb (JEP, DSP), and 3 female Hooded Mergansers on the Maneadero Plain 4-5 Jan (MJI et al.).

Continuing the trend from recent years, 3 Harris's Hawks were relatively far n. at Heroes de la Independencia 12 Jan (MDC). On the heels of last Oct's birds at Ciudad Constitución, 19 Swainson's Hawks were just w. of Ciudad Insurgentes 2 Feb, and 2 juvs. were at Santa Teresita 5 Feb (all JEP, DSP). A juv. Zone-tailed Hawk at El Rosario 25 Jan (JEP, DSP) was the only one found in B.C..

The season's shorebird highlight was a Solitary Sandpiper at Lagunas de Chametla 6 Feb (RC, RL, *U.A.B.C.S.); the only previous winter record for the Region was of three at Migrño, B.C.S. 9 Feb 1999. Examples of gulls on the "wrong" coasts of B.C.S. were provided by a Yellow-footed at Todos Santos 29 Jan and 8 Westerns between San Juan de la Costa and La Paz 28 Jan—1 Feb (all JEP, DSP). Two or 3 Elegant Terns at Loreto 2 Jan (†MJI) represented the first winter record for the Region.

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

Three Ruddy Ground-Doves at Todos Santos 29 Jan (JEP, DSP) were the only ones reported, a surprising drop-off from the large numbers recorded in fall. The migrations of Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds through the Region are imprecisely known. Although Allen's was considered "abundant" at Mulegé in March 1996 (*Great Basin Naturalist* 57: 131-141), identification problems with this species pair led Howell et al. (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 128, 192) to consider the species unconfirmed in B.C.S. An ad. male Allen's reported at Vizcaino, B.C.S. 14 Feb (MDC) was midway through the period during which Allen's were found at Bahía de Los Angeles (5 Feb—6 Mar; MF, GF) and was almost certainly correctly identified, but the problem of green-backed male Rufous Hummingbirds remains. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Santo Tomás 5 Jan (JEP). Rare woodpeckers in B.C.S. were a Red-breasted Sapsucker at San Ignacio 3 Jan (†MJI) and a Northern Flicker near Santa Teresita 5 Feb (†JEP, DSP). These represented the 2nd and first state records, respectively (cf. the fall report).

The Region's first wintering Least Flycatcher was at Guerrero Negro 3-26 Jan (ph. †MJI, JEP), while a Hammond's Flycatcher at Ensenada 3 Dec—4 Jan (RAE, vt. RAH; Fig. 1) furnished the first winter record for B.C.; a Gray Flycatcher on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (PAG, †GMCC) was more expected. Fewer than 10 Tropical Kingbirds have been found wintering on the peninsula (divided between the northwest and the Cape District), so a calling bird on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (PAG, †GMCC) and a silent one at Loreto 25 Feb (†SFB) were notable. Thick-billed Kingbirds are now considered rare and regular in fall and winter in the Cape District; the season's only report was of one at Santiago 31 Jan (JEP, DSP). Outside the Cape District, single Cassin's Vireos were on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (†MSM) and at San Isidro 2 Feb (JEP, DSP). A Plumbeous Vireo near San Javier 4 Feb (JEP) was in the Cape District, where small numbers probably winter regularly; another on the Maneadero Plain 4-5 Jan (DSC, †MSM, RAE) was in B.C., where less expected.

SWALLOWS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

Winter swallow reports included 3 Northern

Rough-wingeds at Estero Punta Banda 4 Jan (DSC et al.) and one at Chametla 28 Jan (JEP), 9 Barns between Tijuana and La Salina 3 Jan (RAH), 9 more on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (GMCC et al.), and singles at Chametla 28 Jan and near Santa Teresita 5 Feb (both JEP). At least 3 American Robins at Guerrero Negro 29 Dec—26 Jan (MJI et al.) and another near Santa Teresita 5 Feb (JEP, DSP) were in B.C.S., where the species is rare in fall/winter (apart from birds resident in the Sierra de La Laguna).

Eastern warblers did not disappoint: A Tennessee at Guerrero Negro 3-26 Jan (ph., †MJI et al.) and another at San Antonio 1 Feb (JEP, DSP) constituted the 2nd and 3rd winter records for B.C.S.; a Chestnut-sided at San Javier 4 Feb (JEP, DSP) and a Prairie at Todos Santos 29 Jan (DSP, JEP) furnished first winter records for the peninsula; a female Cape May Warbler on the Maneadero Plain 5 Jan (†DSC, †MSM, RAE) and a male and 2 females at Miraflores 31 Jan (†JEP, DSP) followed just one previous winter record in the Region. Black-throated Green Warblers were previously unrecorded in winter, but lery *Eucalyptus* trees on the Maneadero Plain that held 3 on 30 Oct yielded a female on 3 Dec (RAH) and at least one male on 4 Jan and 16 Feb (JEP); an additional bird was about one km s. of there on 4 Jan (†JEP).

Reports of w. warblers were comparatively scarce; examples included just 2 Nashvilles (Punta Banda 4 Jan [JEP] and Sierra de La Laguna 15 Feb [MDC]); one Yellow in B.C. (Maneadero Plain 5 Jan [MSM, DSC]); one Black-throated Gray in B.C. (Maneadero Plain 5 Jan [MSM, DSC]); 2 Hermits (San Quintín Plain 24 Jan [JEP, DSP] and Sierra de La Laguna 15 Feb [MDC]); 2 Palms (both on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan [†JEP, †MSM]); 7 Black-and-whites (one in B.C.); 2 American Redstarts in B.C.; 6-8 Wilson's in B.C.; and 2 Yellow-breasted Chats (Mulegé 27 Jan [JEP, DSP] and Todos Santos 29 Jan [DSP]). A male MacGillivray's Warbler on the Maneadero Plain 4-5 Jan (†DSC, †MSM, et al.) was unprecedented in B.C. during winter.

Seven Summer Tanagers (5 in B.C., 2 in B.C.S.) was a healthy sum, particularly compared with a paltry 3 Westerns in B.C.: Ensenada 4 Jan (†RAH) and 2 at Cantamar 5 Jan (DSC, MSM). In B.C.S., Western Tanager counts of 2 at Guerrero Negro 2 Jan and one at Loreto 3 Jan (both MJI), 9 at Mulegé 27 Jan, 9 at Ciudad Constitución 28 Jan, and 10 at San Isidro 3 Feb (all JEP, DSP) suggest a wider winter distribution than previously known. Four Chipping Sparrows at San Javier 1 Jan (MJI) were in B.C.S., where the winter status is unclear, while a Brewer's Sparrow on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (†GMCC, PAG) and 3 Clay-colored on the San Quintín Plain 24 Jan (JEP) were extralimital. Two Sooty Fox Sparrows at El Rosario 24-25 Jan (JEP) were as far s. on the peninsular mainland as this



Baja California's first wintering Hammond's Flycatcher at Ensenada, B. C., was among numerous highlights of the Region's inaugural Christmas Bird Count, held on 4 January 2002. This bird had been present here since 3 December. Photograph from digital video by Robert A. Hamilton.

subspecies group has been found. A Swamp Sparrow on the Maneadero Plain 5 Jan (DSC, †MSM) furnished just the 6th Regional record, single White-throated Sparrows, only marginally commoner, were found at La Bufadora 4 Jan (JEP) and on the San Quintín Plain 24 Jan (DSP, JEP). An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow at San Isidro 2 Feb (JEP) was the first for the s. third of the peninsula since early in the last century. Two Gray-headed Juncos remained at Punta Banda 3 Dec (RAH, RAE), with one there 4 Jan (JEP). A Lazuli Bunting on the San Quintín Plain 24 Jan (JEP) provided B.C.'s 2nd winter record. At least 1000 Yellow-headed Blackbirds with 2500 Brown-headed Cowbirds just e. of Ciudad Insurgentes 28 Jan (JEP, DSP) comprised the peninsula's largest recorded concentration of the former species by an order of magnitude. Two Baltimore Orioles were found: Guerrero Negro 26 Jan and La Purísima 2 Feb (both JEP).

Corrigendum

In the summer report, the Red-breasted Nuthatch noted was indeed the first mainland summer record, but the species was formerly resident on Isla Guadalupe.

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